

# REFLECTING ON POLICY RESEARCH: INSIGHTS ON ENGAGEMENT

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## Main message

Change is not the outcome of a simple “from”(research) “to” (policy) model. It is most likely to take place in the form of incremental adjustments, grounded in daily interactions between stakeholders

### Everybody Knows..

- Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is at the core of the water policy framework of Burkina Faso
- Water agencies and local water committees (CLE) have been set up to manage water resources
- They face implementation challenges



Figure 1. Offices as field sites



Figure 2. People as driving forces

### How did IWRM come into being?

IWRM was promoted in West Africa by an **advocacy coalition** of Danish water professionals flanked by Burkinabe policy makers

A few high-ranking Burkinabe civil servants orchestrated a **policy network**, through which they acquired influence at national and regional level

This was facilitated by regional and international venues provided by DANIDA and GWP

A large pool of Burkinabe consultants, many of who are former civil servants, play a pivotal role in the design and implementation of water policies and programs in francophone West Africa

Approaches to IWRM and participation in particular are grounded in an “upward accountability” ethos

### Why does it matter

Framing **policy as a practice**, that is something people do and undo rather than as a normative reference point, allows for understanding **how and why people take decisions** and in which arenas

Such an approach allows for identifying **multiple policy engagement channels and strategies**

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## Findings

- Fruitful engagement rests on a fine balance between long-term institutional partnerships and one-off pragmatic interventions. This is possible to achieve only after **building trust and legitimacy**.
- Early collaborative project development proved to be a very valuable phase to understand policy processes, identify engagement opportunities, and work towards mutual understanding and legitimacy
- Stakeholders beyond the administration still need to acquire a legitimacy to meaningfully contribute to making decision over water management

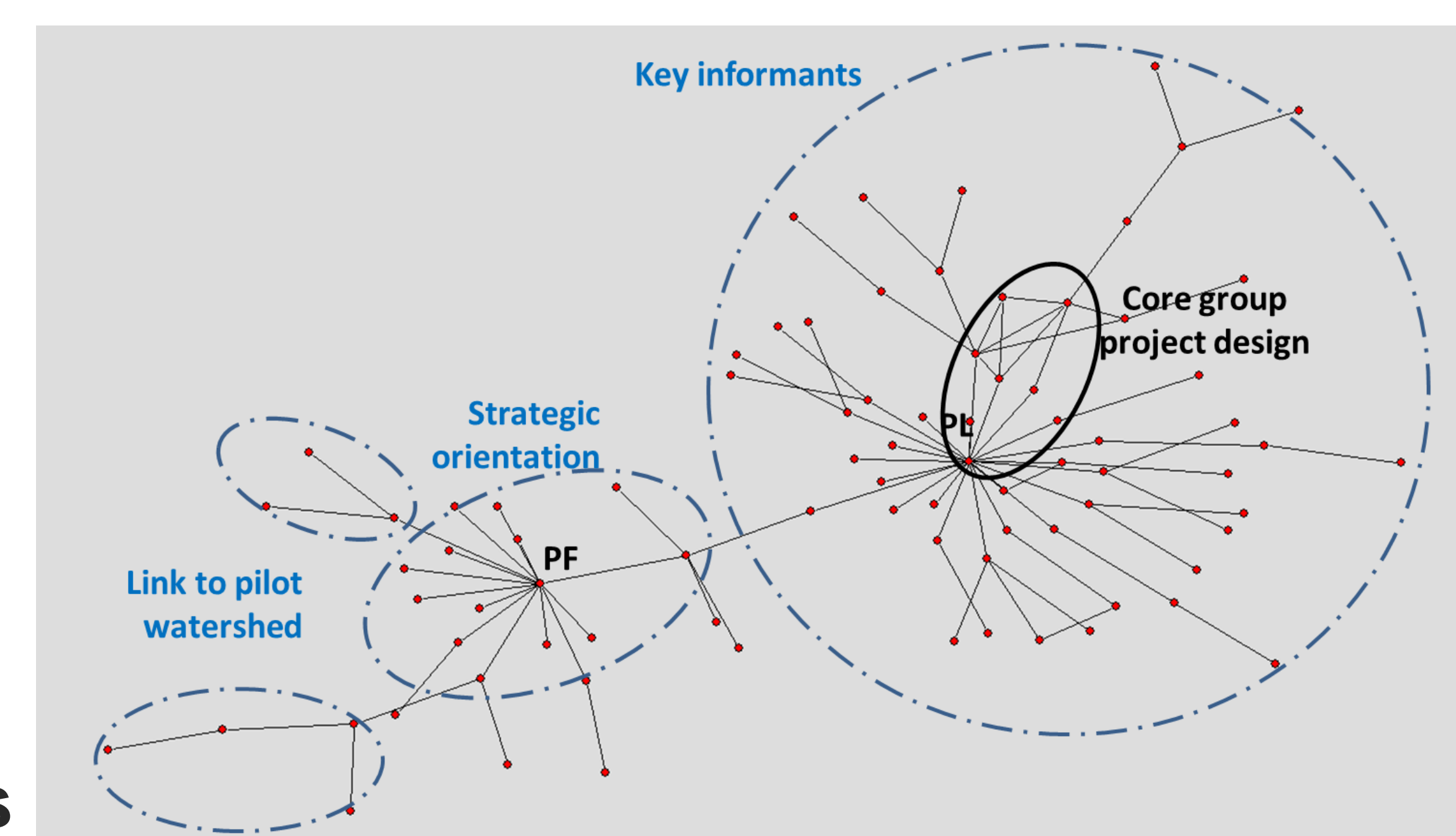


Figure 3: Building a network for understanding and identifying engagement opportunities

#### About CPWF

The CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food was launched in 2002. CPWF aims to increase the resilience of social and ecological systems through better water management for food production (crops, fisheries and livestock). CPWF currently works in six river basins globally: Andes, Ganges, Limpopo, Mekong, Nile and Volta.

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